

[Doc Larken]

#15

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

SEP - 8 1938

RANGE-LORE

D. (Doc) Larken was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, November 21, 1866. He moved to Collin County, Texas, in 1872. He only lived there one year, then moved to San Saba County. He lived in San Saba until 1890 when he moved to Coryell County. He moved with his family to Coke County in 1901, and settled on a ranch near Tennyson.

Mr. Larkin says: "My father, who was a stockman and farmer, and my mother, were both born in Tennessee. They moved to Missouri for awhile after they married. They weren't satisfied and pretty soon they left for California. That was during the gold rush. They were with an immigrant train of about one hundred people. My oldest brother was born on that trip. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 They carried some furniture, a few chickens, a pigs and a milk cow along. My mother would laugh and tell about milking the cow in the morning and having churned butter for supper that night. My father said they saw lots of Indians, but they didn't have any real trouble with them but once. A woman and her child ventured out too far from camp about dusk one evening, and the Indians made off with them. The men hunted for them several days, but never found any trace of them.

Library of Congress

"When I was a kid we rode horseback every where we went, except maybe to preachin' when the whole family was goin', then we'd go in an ox wagon. The women rode on side-saddles in them days, and they done somethin' besides ride, too, they plowed with oxen. I've seen lots of women follow a team of oxen all day long, and I've seen 'em help and work cattle all day long, too.

"There was lots of wild stuff in San Saba County when we lived there. I remember when I was just a kid, me and some more boys was fishin' on the river. I happened to look up and spy a panther just on the other side of the river. He was standing perfectly still and gazin' straight at us. It scared me so bad I nearly dropped my fishin' pole. I whispered to the other kids, and we lit out home, slowly at first. When we thought we was out of sight we ran. We ran about a mile, all the way home, but he didn't follow us. 3 I guess he'd had his dinner.

"When we first moved to San Saba the men always went armed on account of the wild animals and Indians. If they went to church or any place like that they'd carry their old cap and bell guns along and stack them all in a corner.

"I was raised on a horse's back; never did learn to walk good. I began riding broncs and breaking horses when just a lad of a boy. I never had one to hurt me bad. I rode a bronc at a prohibition rally at Johnson City once that like to got me. Several had tried to ride that demon. He was sure a mean one. I rode him, but it nearly done me in, I was so jolted and sore from it, I couldn't hardly walk for a week.

"I helped to drive a herd (about 3,000 head) of cattle from Llano to Jones County in 1889, when I was workin' for the H. H. outfit in Llano. It was still open range and good grass up there, and we was takin' 'em up there to winter 'em. We lived outdoors all the time, on a horse or under a tarpaulin.

"We had a stampede when we was camped one night on White Flat in Nolan County. Along about midnight we heard the boys an guard calling for us to get up. A big thunder

Library of Congress

cloud had made up in the west and the thunder and lightning was somethin' to make you feel uneasy. 4 "The boss ordered us all to fork our saddles in a hurry. By the time we rode out to the herd, the cattle was gettin' restless. They was bawlin' and stampin', and tryin' to move around. The boys was doin' their best to keep 'em together, but just before the rain started it came a keen clap of thunder and zip - they was gone like a streak. We rode all night nearly, but they scattered and we never did get 'em all together. I had a small bunch in there with them, and I lost nearly all of mine.

"I worked on the Pitchfork ranch near Spur in '88, and drifted on down to the Hitson ranch. I helped sign the petition to got a Post Office at Jayton. I broke horses on the Hitson, Matador, C. B., and other ranches all over the country. I received from \$3.50 to \$5.00 per horse, according to his age.

"It was fun to ride wild ones at first, but after awhile it got to be work. It was a job I could do, though, and somehow how I just couldn't stay off of 'em. I can truthfully say I never was throwed, not after I really learned how to ride 'em.

"When we was out on the range with an outfit, we carried a pack horse and our saddle horse, too. There was usually from 100 to 150 saddle horses with an outfit, and they kept a horse wrangler for them. I was used to ridin' and bein' away from home some when I was a kid and I didn't mind. 5 "We generally had two big round-ups a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. We'd cut the cattle for shipping or branding, and then hold them, or as a rule they'd have some branding and tally men and they'd start right in with the first bunch. They'd work in pairs, one would bulldog 'em and the other would mark or brand them.

"Shucks, but we sure had lots of fun if we did work hard. We'd ride for miles on Saturday night to take in a dance or to just get to town. That's cowboy life for you, always ready for work or fun or whatever would come.

"Fiddlesticks, I say we'd razz the green hands, but they was generally good natured enough to take it. If they wasn't we'd pour it on 'em sure enough. Sometimes we'd whip

Library of Congress

'em with leggin's, maybe make 'em ride a side-saddle or put 'em on a jumpin' horse just to see 'em throwed off.

"One old boy - I believe it was an the C. B. ranch - got a job one day in the spring. Our boss told us to go easy with him, he'd had a streak of bad luck. He'd lost his parents and this was his first job on a ranch away from home, but it turned out it wasn't his first job on a ranch.

"We saddled him a gentle old nag with a kid's saddle. He looked it over, then took it off and asked if there was another saddle horse he could ride. There was only one in the lot and they told him to help himself. He went and caught up a horse, 6 which was a really mean one, and to our surprise he rode him. Well, the joke was on us. That boy had a right to get mad, but he didn't. He accepted our apology in a good natured way. That made the boys more careful about their jokes after that."

REFERENCE:- D. Larken, Tennyson, Texas. Interviewed August 29, 1938. 1 Mrs. Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

Runnels County

Page 1. Typed [dup?]

COWBOY LORE

D. (DOC) LARKEN was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, November 21, 1866. He moved to Collin County, Texas, in 1872. He only lived there one year, then moved to San Saba County. He lived in San Saba until 1890 when he moved to Coryell County. He married

Library of Congress

Miss Liza Dunlap in 1891. He moved with his family to Coke County in 1901, and settled on a ranch near Tennyson.

Mr. Larken says: "My father, who was a stockman and farmer, and my mother, were both born in Tennessee. They moved to Missouri for awhile after they married. They weren't satisfied and pretty soon they left for California. That was during the gold rush. They was were with an immigrant train of about one hundred people. My oldest brother was born on that trip.

"They carried some furniture, a few chickens, a pig, and a milk cow along. My mother would laugh and tell about milking the cow in the morning and having churned butter for supper that night. My father said they saw lots of redskins Indians , but they didn't have any real trouble with them but once. A woman and her child ventured out too far away from camp about dusk one evening, and the Indians made off with them. The men hunted for them several days, but never found any trace of them.

"When I was a kid we rode horseback every where we went, except maybe to preachin' when the wole whole family was goin', then we'd go in an ox wagon. The women rode with on side saddles in them days, and they done something' besides ride, too, they plowed with oxen. I've seen lots of woemn women follow a team of oxen all day long, and I've seen 'em ride and work cattle all day long, too. C12 - Texas 2 "There was lots of wild stuff in San Saba County when we lived there. I remeber remember when I was just a kid, me and some more boys was fishin' on the river. I happened to look up and spy a panther just on the other side of the river. He was standing perfectly still and grazin' straight at us. It scared me so all fired bad I nearly dropped my fishin' pole. I whispered to the other kids, and we lit out home, slowly at first. When we thought we was out of sight we ran. We ran about a mile, all the way home, but he didn't follow us. I guess he'd had his dinner.

Library of Congress

"When we first moved to San Saba the men always went armed on account of the wild animals and Indians. If they went to church or any place like that they'd carry their old cap and ball guns along and stack them all in a corner.

"I was raised on a horses horse's back; never did learn to walk good. I began riding broncs and breaking horses when just a lad of a boy. I never had one to hurt me bad. I rode a bronc at a prohibition rally at Johnson City once that like to got me. Several had tried to ride that demon. He was shore sure a mean 'un one. I rode him, but it nearly done me in, I was so jolted and sore from it, I couldn't hardly walk for a week.

"I helped to drive a herd- (about 3,000 head-) of cattle from Llano to Jones County in 1889, when I was workin' for the H. H. outfit in LLano. It was still open range and good grass up there, and we was takin' 'em up there to winter 'em. We lived out doors all the time , on a horse or under a tarpaulin.

"We had a stamped when we was camped one night on White Flat in Nolan County. Along about midnight we heard the boys on guard calling for us to get up. A big thunder could cloud had made up in the west and the 3 thunder and lighting was somethin' to make you feel uneasy.

"The boss ordered us all to fork our saddles in a hurry. By the time we rode out to the herd, the cattle [??] gettin' restless. They was ballin bawlin ' and stampin stampin ', and trying to move around. The boys was doin' their best to keep 'em together, but just before the rain started it came a keen clap of thunder and zip—they was gone like a streak. We rode all night nearly, but they scattered and we never did get 'em all together. I had a small bunch in ther there with the, and I lost nearly all of mine.

"I worked on the Pitchfork ranch near Spur in '88, and drifted on down to the Hitson ranch. I helped sign the petition to get a Post Office at Jayton. I broke horses on the Hitson,

Library of Congress

Matador, C. B. and other ranches all over the country. I received from \$3.50 to \$5.00 per horse, according to his age.

“It was fun to ride wild ones at first, but after awhile it got to be work. It was a job I could do, though, and somehow I just couldn't stay off of 'em. I can truthfully say I never was throwed, not after I really learned how to ride 'em.

“When we was out on the range with an outfit, we carried a pack horse and our saddle horse, too. There was usually from [?] 100 to 150 saddle horses with an outfit, and they kept a horse wrangler for them. I was used to ridin' and bein' away from home some when I was a kid and I didn't mind.

“We generally had two big round-ups a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. We'd cut the cattle for shipping or branding, and then hold them , or as a rule they'd have some branding and tally men and they'd 4 start right in with the first bunch. They'd work in pairs, one would bulldog 'em and the other would mark or brand them.

“Shucks, but we shore sure had lots of fun if we did work hard. We'd ride for miles on Saturday night to take in a dance or to just get to town. That's Cowboy life for you, always ready for work or fun or whatever would come.

“Fiddlesticks, I say we'd razz the green hands, but they was generally good natured enough to take it. If they wasn't we'd pour it on 'em shore sure enough. Sometimes we'd whip 'em with leggins, maybe make 'em ride a side saddle or put 'em on a jumpin' horse just to see 'em throwed off.

“One old boy-I believe it was on the C. B. ranch-got a job one day in the spring. Our boss told us to go easy with him, he'd had a streak of bad luck. He'd lost his parents and this was this first job on a ranch away from home, but it turned out it wasn't his first job on a ranch.

Library of Congress

"We saddled him a gentle old nag with a kids kid's saddle. He looked it over , then took it off and asked if there was another saddle horse he could ride. There was only one in the lot and they told him to help hisself himself . He went and caught up a horse , which was a really mean one , and to our surprise he rode him. Well, the joke was on us. That boy had a right to get mad, but he didn't. He accepted our apology in a good natured way. That made the boys more careful about their jokes after that." Bibliography D. Larken. Tennyson Texas. Bronte [?]. Old Cowhand and bronc rider and Pioneer citizen of Texas [?] Coke County. Interviewed Aug, 29, 1938.